

Testimony on **HB 5248** An Act concerning Collateral Consequences of a Criminal record being heard today in Labor and Public Employees committee of the 2022 legislative session by **SWAA CT (Social Welfare Action Alliance)**

The Ct SWAA chapter is a group of professional social workers and allies working in partnership with those communities who identify as being most negatively impacted by current societal inequities to educate, discuss and organize around correcting these inequities. We believe that “those closest to problem are closest to the solution but are furthest from the resources and power.” We work to bring the opinion of those subject to those inequities in Ct to the source of power, in this case the Ct Office of Health Strategy. Our stated priorities are: Advancing 1-racial, economic and social justice, 2- health care as a human right, 3-policing, justice and prison transformation leading to abolition,4-voter and election reform 5-Tax equity and fairness

Testimony-**SWAA CT** is concerned about those who have been incarcerated being able to return from prison to rejoin their families, and their community. We want them to be able to obtain housing, work, and truly participate in community life. Many times, people with a criminal record are unable to get employment because of their criminal record, are not able to live with family or friends in or apply for public housing, or receive state direct benefits to help with living expenses or public subsidies such as for childcare. While the large majority of Ct citizens (82%) believing that people who have been convicted of a crime **can** turn their lives around and can become productive members of the community if given the right kind of help, passing HB5348 would be a good first step in giving them the right help. It is time to begin to remove obstacles for those who have a criminal record so they can have **real and honest** second chance. Let them work and live in their communities by passing this legislation.

SWAA CT stands with those who have been incarcerated in asking for passage of the **Act Concerning Collateral Consequences of a criminal record** and urges each of the legislators reviewing this testimony to really explore the obstacles in place in CT for those with a criminal record to rejoin the community. It is not easy to succeed, and we need reduce the obstacles and make it a little easier.

Thank you for your consideration from the **Social Welfare Action Alliance** of Ct. Coordinating Committee